

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 8 offered by Ms. SUTTON:

At the end of title V of the bill, insert the following (and conform the table of contents accordingly):

SEC. ____ VETERANS PREFERENCE.

Section 9 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638) is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(ff) VETERANS PREFERENCE.—In making awards under this section, Federal agencies shall give priority to applications from veterans, as defined in section 101(2) of title 38, United States Code, so as to increase the number of SBIR and STTR award recipients who are veterans.”.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 1125, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. SUTTON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio.

Ms. SUTTON. Madam Chairman, I want to begin by thanking Chairman VELÁZQUEZ, Chairman GORDON, and Chairman WU for their leadership on this bill, as well as the ranking members for their leadership.

This amendment would require agencies that administer Small Business Innovation Research Programs to give special consideration to pressing transportation and infrastructure research activities when reviewing grant applications.

The devastating state of this Nation's crumbling infrastructure was demonstrated in dramatic fashion last August when the I-35 bridge in Minneapolis collapsed into the Mississippi River. And it is also demonstrated every day as people drive over potholes in their neighborhoods and sit in traffic jams on our crowded highways as they travel to and from work.

Tackling the repair of our Nation's infrastructure is not a glamorous task, but it is absolutely essential to our Nation's long-term success.

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Investments in infrastructure are critical for public safety and boost local economies by providing more Americans with good-paying jobs. Building our Nation's infrastructure for a new economy and a new century is vital to revamping our work force and revitalizing our communities.

It is also crucial that as we rebuild our roads and mass transit systems, we act as stewards of the environment and seek greener and cleaner technologies for fueling our economy.

America's working families deserve creative and innovative thinking and policies from us as their representatives. This amendment will ensure that as agencies review small business innovation applications they place a premium on projects that focus on transportation and infrastructure, the building blocks of our economy.

I urge a “yes” vote on the amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Chairman, while not opposed to the amendment, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the gentlewoman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Chairman, I really thank the gentlewoman for her amendment and her efforts to improve this bill.

The amendment requires Federal agencies to give priority to SBIR and STTR applications submitted by veterans. During a time when our country is at war, it is particularly appropriate to prioritize SBIR applications submitted by our veterans. And I support this amendment.

I would like to yield to the gentleman from Missouri for any comments that he might have.

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Chairman, I don't have any opposition.

Mr. EHLERS. Will the gentlewoman please yield?

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Yes, I will.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you for yielding.

I just have to express some concern. We already had a preference earlier for organizations that have exhibited concern about their carbon footprint. And I don't object to the one about veterans, but I worry about getting too many preferences involved here. And Uncle Joe, who's trying to build a widget in his barn, may just fall in the cracks because he doesn't meet any of these preference categories.

I don't particularly oppose this one about transportation. Everyone knows we need improvements in that. But there are so many different areas, I don't want to bog down the SBA in dealing with these requests by having to worry about preference after preference.

So basically I'm issuing a warning here. Let's watch it in the future, and let's make sure we don't add too many preference requirements or it becomes very, very cumbersome.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time, and I accept the amendment.

Ms. SUTTON. I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. SUTTON).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MS. SUTTON

The Acting CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 9 printed in House Report 110-603.

Ms. SUTTON. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 9 offered by Ms. SUTTON:

In section 107(3) of the bill, in the quoted matter, strike “or” at the end of subpara-

graph (D), and insert after subparagraph (D) the following:

(E) the National Academy of Sciences, in the final report issued by the ‘Transit Research and Development: Federal Role in the National Program’ project and the ‘Transportation Research, Development and Technology Strategic Plan (2006-2010)’ issued by the United States Department of Transportation Research and Innovative Technology Administration, and in subsequent reports issued by the National Academy of Sciences and United States Department of Transportation on transportation and infrastructure; or

In section 504(a) of the bill, in the quoted matter, redesignate (E) as (F).

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 1125, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. SUTTON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio.

Ms. SUTTON. Madam Chairman, I want to thank Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ for her support of this amendment; that would require that we recognize our veterans in this bill.

We ask our veterans to sacrifice years of their lives to protect our country and our loved ones. In return, we have made a commitment to honor their service.

And last year this Congress provided the largest increase in funding for the VA in history. And this year I am proud that in this bill we will continue to reaffirm our support for the men and women who have chosen to serve their country in uniform.

It's our responsibility to ensure our veterans receive the care they deserve. Our veterans also deserve to receive, as I have proposed in this amendment, priority status when applying for awards through the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs.

This amendment will grant a preference for the brave men and women who have sacrificed for all of us. As they return home and restart their lives, it's essential that the number of veterans who receive SBIR and STTR awards increases. The underlying bill includes a preference as was discussed, for applicants from rural areas and veterans deserve the same consideration.

Madam Chairman, 3 million veteran business owners responded to the 2002 survey of business owners administered through the U.S. Census Bureau. This survey revealed that veterans tend to be better educated and slightly older before starting or acquiring their businesses. This trend can undoubtedly be attributed to their time in the service and their use of one of the most important and successful pieces of legislation this body has ever passed, the GI bill.

Madam Chairman, our veterans will continue to make us proud as they make good use of the funding available through these important small business programs. As I have often said, it is not enough to simply pay tribute to our veterans with words; we must show them our appreciation with our actions.